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Contemporary Poetry For Children

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GOOD POETRY for children is good poetry which is good for children—which solemn incantation shall be at once un-Stein-ized. I mean only that poetry for children should be, first and foremost, and throughout, excellent poetry, essentially and indubitably poetry; and it should be, secondarily, but quite secondarily, poetry that is within the apprehension and the scope, the rather wide-flung scope, of children's interests.

These are the two elements which enter into good poetry for children: poetic merit and children's interests. I would guess—making a most hazardous leap out into the unknown—that the former is tenfold or a hundred-fold more important than the latter. For almost anyone can become an authority, or at least an author in the field of children's reading interests. One way he may take is to bone up on the dozens of vocabulary studies, the scores of reading tests, and the thousand and one investigations of the reading interests of children; he will then be able, presumably, to appraise children's poetry as to subjects, style, index of comprehension, and—exceedingly important!

—as to whether the vocabulary is sufficiently simple. Or one can take the less toilsome route: one can observe and record the small chronicles of children, their fancies, their amusing interpretations of life, their funny sayings and doings, their artless, or artful, and endearing tricks and manners, their domestic trivia. Then if one has felicity or even facility in versifying, he (usually it is *she*) can make children's poems, "and pass them current too." It is as simple—"simple" is the precise word—as simple a matter as that.

But one has to be a poet to be a children's poet, and one should be a potential poet if he is to be a percipient and trustworthy judge of children's poetry—and that is no simple matter. The poetry should be good poetry; and in addition it should be for children. But no, "addition" is not the word: it is rather a problem of multiplication, of making children's interests and points of view, their insights and their outlooks an integral, a corporate element in the poetry. A pretty tall order: to be an authentic poet, with "the vision and the faculty divine," with the specific faculty of appealing to child-

hood, and with the quality of his art not strained by condescension or feigned simplicity. One must be not only a good poet to be a children's poet, he must be a special, and rare, kind of good poet.

When therefore I was asked to report on the recent situation and trends in children's poetry in England and America, my first task was to determine who are the excellent literary artists, those who are *poets*—for children rather than those who are *poets-for-children*. Beginning with 1920, since I had then published a book appraising the major poets of childhood, I could leaf through and loaf through the fifty-odd volumes of original verse proffered to children during these years, and could thus separate the sheep from the goats. This was the engaging pastoral task to which I set myself.

But how to determine with certainty which are the genuine poets? In the scientific jargon of the day, what are the criteria in the light of which to scale and rate the poets, as poets and then as children's poets? And if now I seem to be expatiating upon a more general problem, to be adding another analysis of the nature of poetry, I would defend myself by asserting that there is no possible approach to children's poetry except the aesthetic approach.

I apply first the test of intuition. If, to use the old saw, if I have a "feeling in my bones" that the author of a book of poems is a poet, then a poet he is. Of course, this means having a deal of faith in one's private skeletal endowments; one may well wonder whether they are always, in the phrase of the Brothers Grimm, "singing bones." Perhaps the well-worn statement of Emily Dickinson is apropos here: "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold that no fire can ever warm me, I know it is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know this is poetry." So Robert Frost: "A living poem

begins with a lump in the throat." Surely it is not mere mysticism to say that a true poem makes a strong and immediate physical impact upon a sensitive reader: it stirs bodily responses, circulatory, respiratory, glandular, visceral; it "hits you where you live." It may hit me there today and not tomorrow; it may hit me and not some other reader equally as impressionable. But for me at this moment that which gives me this jolt, this feeling in my bones, this throat-catching certitude of intense beauty, rich value, high significance, of concentrated and interpreted experience, this is poetry.

I am not able to determine to my own satisfaction what it is in poetry, in some poetry that affects me in this manner. Perhaps it is in part the rhythm; perhaps the combination of sounds, necessitating certain muscular movements which in turn set up certain emotional states. No doubt it is due in part to the highly sensuous nature of poetry, to its vivid images: its use of colors and odors, its suggestions of sounds, of warmth and cold, and above all of muscular movements. All of this presents to us, makes present to us as we read, the primal stuff of sensations, of consciousness, of emotion, and moves us, excites us, "gets" us pretty much as if actual, first-hand stimuli were beating upon our sense-organs and causing bodily reaction.

Whatever may be the explanation, the first evidence of poetry is its assault upon us, its power to secure from us a physical "come-back." First, the impact. And second, the import. I love the statement made with such aplomb by a small girl: "The reason I like poetry is because it always goes somewhere and means something," which might be matched by Alice's remark after she had read "Jabberwocky": "Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas, only I don't know exactly what they are."

The substance of a good poem is the

realistic sensory material of life: facts, experiences, actions, sights, smells, sounds, scenes, people and other animals, and such-like. A good poem is rooted in the concrete, or to employ a more modern figure, it takes off from a solid, substantial run-way. But excellent poems do not remain confined to the literal, to the local habitation; most of them, even the severely imagistic, the "pure poetry" type, go somewhere and mean something. Poetry has overtones, irradiations, emanations, it has nimbuses, auras; poetry opens up vistas and avenues; poetry has exterior and ulterior significance; poetry connects us up with the general, the planetary, the cosmic. These hints, these intimations, "where more is meant than meets the ear" are essentials in poetry of the highest merit, whether for adults or for children.

But, I hasten to say, import does not mean moral or lesson or message. Nor does it signify a clear-cut, expository statement of meaning. The finest poetry, the most haunting poetry does not often commit itself, limit itself to a rationalistic interpretation; it shies away from explanations and paraphrases, which is one reason that school-teachers, accustomed to "making things clear" are so frequently inept when trafficking with poetry. "Poetry," says Carl Sandburg; "Poetry is a series of explanations of life, fading off into horizons too swift for explanations." Exactly. Or let Edwin Arlington Robinson say it:

And with a mighty meaning of a kind
That tells the more the more it is not told.

So hostile are poets themselves to the neat and tidy operations of the explaining and analyzing mind (what one of my students has called the "outlinizing" intellect), that they sometimes go to absurd lengths in announcing their loyalty to the literal. Archibald MacLeish asserts flatly:

A poem should not mean
But be.

In like manner, Robert Frost, disgusted with the specific interpretations which have been made of the tremendous "hovering" meaning in "Mending Wall," declares that the poem merely recounts an incident of New England farm life. But Frost the poet is wiser than Frost the lecturer. Regardless of what he says, the poem escapes from such narrow boundaries, though it doesn't take refuge in an equally narrow "interpretation." It is our insatiable lust for clarifying and explaining, for "unscrewing the inscrutable" that alienates poets and unspoiled children and sensitive readers. I am reminded of Cécile, the delightful little girl in Miss Cather's *Shadows on the Rock*, and her plea, after some one has told her a saint's story and is hastening on with "And now from this we see"; "Don't explain it, *please*."

The fact is, that the most exquisite poetry cannot be resolved into *meanings*, does not eventuate in statements which the logical intellect can bandy about. It induces moods, it lifts into universal emotions, it gives momentary impressions of beauty, poignancy, inappeasable exaltation; it shades off, fades out into tenuous but magical evocations. Poetry "takes me somewhere"; but, like the child in Stevenson's "Garden" after he has visited in the Land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way,
I never can get back, by day,
Nor can remember plain and clear
The curious music that I hear.

Poetry, the finest poetry, whether for children or their elders, has import. The literal, the concrete, no matter how faithfully recorded and delicately presented, never attains the utmost possibilities of poetry, unless it beguiles us, by means so unobtrusive and ingenuous that we are hardly aware of them, into a feeling of our mystic fellowship with all life, into an apprehension of the generic experiences of humanity. Is this too high a reach

for children's poetry? Not at all. For a child's reach, too, must exceed his grasp. He too must now and then stand tiptoe on the misty mountain top. He, too, must be refined with the Aristotelian katharsis.

Impact and import. The third requisite of poetry may be indicated by the high school boy's attempt to define the structure of poetry: "Poetry," he averred, much to the glee of his fellows; "Poetry must act like poetry." Poetry, in other words, has a technic, a style, a manner. This is, in part, a matter of convention and tradition, as witness the differences, say, between, Hebrew or Greek or Japanese poetry and the English, or between Anglo-Saxon poetry and that of Chaucer, or the various developments in the history of English poetry, such as that in the Romantic Revival or the Imagist and Free Verse movement. But ignoring the more or less extraneous details, poetry of all times and all countries has certain permanent stylistic qualities.

We may reasonably expect good poetry to have distinguished diction. Negatively, this means avoidance of the stereotyped, the commonplace, the rigidly prosaic as well as avoidance of the merely pretty-pretty, the affectedly "literary." More positively, it means that, characteristically, good poetry employs words of vigor and warmth, words of rich connotations and human experiences, that it stretches occasionally the boundaries of word-meanings, that it unites words in successful phrase-marriages, that it strikes off new and happy figures and tropes. The language of poetry is normally language most concentrated, most highly charged with suggestions, intimations, emotive associations.

These are, of course, very glowing claims. The diction of poetry sometimes aims at no more than mere adequacy. It is often content with clear, forthright, economical expression because of the theme and mood or the poet's tempera-

ment. Wordsworth frequently illustrates this, as do Frost and many moderns; and much excellent children's poetry is in this manner. But stereotypes and clichés, deliberately babified vocabulary, and padding for the sake of rhyme or to eke out the rhythm, diction that has neither force nor charm nor sense-appeal—this is below the level of the language expected of poetry.

Moreover, if poetry is to "act like poetry," it must possess—or be possessed by—a rhythm which is not only competent in technique but assonant with the spirit and feeling-tone of the poem, rhythm which is organic and which also follows faithfully the shifting shades of emphasis. Of the rhythm of jingles, of course, no more is demanded than tripping accuracy, lightness, sprightliness—in brief the staccato, "jingly" affect. It is when this counting-out, patting-juba rhythm is monotonously employed as an accompaniment of serious lyric motifs that we find doggerel at its worst, illustrated in Edgar Guest and dozens of versifiers for children. Excellent poetry for children must have as lyrical an utterance as poetry for adults: assonances and echoes, ritardos and accelerandos, pauses and holds and all the variations in stress and accent necessary to the musical expression of the details.

No doubt the lyricism of children's poetry is prevailingly gayer and brighter than that of correspondingly good poetry for adults. Blank verse is never employed, and free verse, though frequently used by child-poets, seems not to be suitable for child-readers. Lines and stanzas being shorter, certain sustained, largo affects are not often heard in children's poetry. But because the composer cannot find a place for the reed- or pipe-organ, he need not limit himself to the mouth-organ or the barrel-organ, or to the fife-and-drum corps, which latter instruments are apparently the favorites with those who

write poetry for children. Surely there should be a place in the children's orchestra for the flute and the violin, the harp, and even the 'cello, not to mention William Blake's pipe and Laura Richards' piccolo. If children's poetry is to "act like poetry" the lyrical quality must be high, fine, and varied.

And now, since after all I am writing of poetry for children, I should discuss as a final criterion the appeal to children. Perhaps the shortest approach to that problem (for a very real problem it is) is the statement that poetry for children should present, should raise into significance, and should interpret the experiences of children. This principle enables us to eliminate at once all that poetry about children and childhood written from the retrospective view-point of adults: Field's "Little Boy Blue," Longfellow's "The Children's Hour," Whittier's "Barefoot Boy," Hood's "I Remember," and many other thoroughly delightful poems. It enables us to eliminate the poetry which represents children whimsically, archly, naïvely; all that "darling," "cunning," verse—remembering that children aren't cute to one another. It enables us to eliminate too, though here we are on less certain ground, the philosophical and the psychological, attempts to solve the mysteries of life, death, and immortality, the baffling frustrations, ironies, and tragedies of existence, love between the sexes—much glorious poetry which is manifestly beyond the horizons of children. It is not that they cannot understand the words and be brought to comprehend the thought; it is that they have not enough personal, sensory, experiential maturity to be quickened and energized by poetry of this kind.

I am not belittling the capacities of children. I have respect for their intelligence, their uncanny intuition, their originality, and independence of insight, their creativeness. But we have nevertheless

often expected children to respond to poetry which is beyond their gamut of interest, beyond what I may call their "emotional quotient," poetry which cannot, even when understood, make impacts and reveal imports.

And, now, judging by much of the poetry being written for children, we are going to the other extreme. We are regarding children as "kids," "tiny tots," "little folks," and are trying to nourish them on poetry which is inane and babyish, which is stultifyingly and aridly "realistic," which is soft and mealy-mouthed and "easy"—save the mark!

Children's poetry must, to be sure, deal with children's experiences, those which they have had or can image themselves as having. But it must make those experiences significant and memorable, and it must be shot through with beauty, translucence, nobility of feeling, challenges to the high emprise of the spirit. Great poetry for children must deal with children's experiences greatly. And if it is contended that most children are not capable most of the time of dwelling on such lofty levels, are not equipped with poetic lungs for breathing such Parnassian air—why, granted promptly. And that goes for adults. "The truth is in minutes rather than in years, in the emotion not of a day, but of a second, in the chill or warmth of a sudden mood," says Robert Littell. "Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the best minds," says Keats, who ought to know—moments so radiant with significance, so refulgent with experiences that they cannot be long endured. But for children, as for men and women these are the epoch-making and the epoch-marking moments, outweighing years of the humdrum, and it may be, preserving our years from the humdrum. This is the glory and the high service of great poetry.

But of course we shall never have much great poetry, for children or for adults;

and if we had it, we would often not measure up to it. Much poetry made for children and liked by them will be below this lofty level, and doubtless it should be. Certainly a deal of nonsense and humorous verse, some of it most delightful, is of a lower, or at least a different order, with qualities and values of its own; and certainly the child's poetical education should include a goodly share of hearty merriment. Let us run the gamut of all children's experiences and moods, and enrich childhood with all the varying pleasures and delights which poetry can induce. But even of jingles and rhymes there are varying gradations of merit, levels of artistry, or artizanship; and it is perhaps as important to distinguish between bad verse and good verse as between bad poetry and good, to recognize at a glance the inane, archly playful, unctuously and anxiously sincere doggerel.

At any rate, I have appraised not only the poetry-makers for children, giving them first place, but also the rhymsters, the metricists. I have tried to cover the entire field. But I have omitted some writers: a few because they seemed unworthy of critical notice and one or two because I could not secure their poetry or permission to quote. I have said nothing about Laura E. Richards or Walter de la Mare because I had discussed them in earlier printed essays. Mr. De la Mare. I may say, I still regard as first among living poets for children, if indeed it is possible to rank artists so mathematically.

Permission to quote the poetry used in this study has been granted by the publishers.

ELIZABETH MADOX ROBERTS

Elizabeth Madox Roberts is familiar to discriminating American readers as author of several novels in which the quality of art raises fiction, not notable for narrative interest or social criticism,

to heights seldom reached in contemporary American literature. But her book of poetry for children,¹ though not so widely known, shows as rich a talent and as fine an art.

Though I have read Miss Roberts' verse long and lovingly and have been amused and bemused to the top of my bent, I still cannot fathom the secrets of her power. Her themes are the ones most frequently presented in children's poetry: nature, familiar scenes, home folks and friends, fancies and fears; her verse patterns have no novelty; she is not especially clever or whimsical or strikingly original—certainly there is nothing here to bowl one over. And yet when I open this volume of her poems, I hear the resonant dial-tone which assures me I am connected up with emotion, beauty, delight, significance.

Some of the poems in *Under the Tree* are no more than accurate records of child life, high points of his experience. Such are "Miss Kate-Marie," "The Butterbean Tent," "Mr. Wells," "On the Hill," "Father's Story," and "The Picnic." But even in most of these the child's unaffected realism shows that he is close to spiritual reality, is "getting warm" in his unconscious seeking. Perhaps this is more evident in the animal poems. Here is one of my favorites:

THE RABBIT²

When they said the time to hide was mine,
I hid back under a thick grape vine.
And while I was still for the time to pass,
A little gray thing came out of the grass.
He hopped his way through the melon bed
And sat down close by a cabbage head.
He sat down close where I could see,
And his big still eyes looked hard at me.
His big eyes bursting out of the rim,
And I looked back very hard at him.

That may be only a close-up of an explicit rabbit crouching by a specific cab-

¹ *Under the Tree*.

² From *Under the Tree*, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts. Copyright 1922 and 1930. Published by The Viking Press.

bage head, but compassion and fellow-feeling devoid of sentimentality are implicit, and intimations may be radiated out concerning all harmless, weak creatures. I get this feeling in "Little Rain," in "The Hens," in "Horse," even in "The Worm," part of which I must quote. The children have found a little worm while digging "wells"—

We watched him pucker up himself^a
And stretch himself to walk away.
He tried to go inside the dirt,
But Dickie made him wait and stay.

His shining skin was soft and wet.
I poked him once to see him squirm,
And then Will said, "I wonder if
He knows that he's a worm."

And then we sat back on our feet
And wondered for a little bit,
And we forgot to dig our wells
A while, and tried to answer it.

And while we tried to find it out,
He puckered in a little wad,
And then he stretched himself again
And went back home inside the clod.

Here, I feel, is the real thing—except that these children are poetry-children, their natural cruelty toward slimy things being mitigated. They poke him once to see him squirm, then a larger curiosity takes possession of them, and, wondering if he knows he is a worm, they end by regarding him, as Burns did the mouse—

Poor earthborn companion
And fellow-mortal,—

who goes back inside the clod, *home*. This is just about the language of children; with exact and pictorial words: "squirm," "stretch," "puckered in a little wad"; with repetitions; with even the "and"—sentence structure (which we in the schools try so hard to eliminate). With such meager materials may genuine poetry be made.

Night-time, the stars, and the moon excite quite naturally the wonder of these

children, and running water (a favorite theme in Stevenson's *Child's Garden*) receives its generous meed of praise. These are delicious smells in "At the Water," and pleasant tinkling sounds in "Water Noises" (the water seeming to say "And do you think? and do you think?"), and fascinating sights in "The Branch," where "A rough little water goes hurrying by." I feel mystery, strangeness, and a groping toward conclusions in many of Miss Roberts' poems: in this the poet and the child are akin. I must quote one three-line poem, an admirable summation of the child's "planetary" view. It has an adroit title, "The People":

The ants are walking under the ground,
And the pigeons are flying over the steeple,
And in between are the people.

That is at once a child's casual observation and a bit of gnomic wisdom which informs us lordly human beings where we belong in the scheme of things.

Miss Robert's children do not have an abnormally agile fancy. The animals talk to them, of course, as they do to all normal children. In "Horse" is a completely satisfying explanation of how animals talk.

He didn't talk out with his mouth;
He didn't talk with words or noise.
The talk was there along his nose;
It seemed and then it was.

Could any psychologist worm himself closer to the nature of fancy: "It *seemed* and then it *was*." These children have also the usual fear-fancies. I cannot refrain from quoting one of these lovely shivery poems: "Strange Tree."

Away beyond the Jarboe house
I saw a different kind of tree.
Its trunk was old and large and bent,
And I could feel it look at me.

The road was going on and on
Beyond to reach some other place.
I saw a tree that looked at me,
And yet it did not have a face.

^a *Op. cit.*

Make It a True One

CAROL RYRIE BRINK*

ANYONE who is accustomed to telling stories to children knows the familiar request: "Please tell us a story—and make it a true one." How many of us, everyday, find ourselves rummaging among the half-forgotten incidents of our childhood to please some persistent young seeker for a "true story"! I know this because I have been both the persistent young seeker and the rummaging parent. Wide awake at all hours of the night as long as I could get a true story, I used to rouse up my poor, sleepy grandmother to remind her where she had left off and to correct the mistakes which had slipped from her drowsy tongue. And now my small daughter pays me back in my own coin by insisting on hearing all of the obscure details of my own childhood.

"But really there isn't another thing to tell!" I protest.

"Well, then go back and begin all over again, *please!*"

Why is actual experience more interesting than the usual fiction? First of all this adventure really did happen to someone, and that fact gives glamour to the most commonplace events. But in addition to this, the true story, as the person who has lived it remembers it, is surrounded by details. Often the details are quite irrelevant, but they are always alive and revealing. For instance when my grandfather proposed to my grandmother, she sat on the side porch of her father's house shelling peas. Many years later and many miles away, when they came to tell her that her husband had been killed, she was sitting on the side porch shelling peas. So the

plop! plop! of round green peas in a tin pan runs through the romance and the tragedy, and the inventors of fiction would be hard put to it to invent a more poignant detail.

There is a platitude, of which we have all grown quite tired, that "truth is stranger than fiction." But the longer I live the more convinced I am that, like most platitudes, there is a great deal in this one. Some years ago in a little French *pension*, I met an old American woman who told me bit by bit the story of her life. If I should write down what she told me I could scarcely hope to sell it to any publisher. It was so strange, so full of fate and coincidence, so theatrically unreal, that even when I repeat it to my friends I see a skeptical glitter appearing in their eyes. Yet I am convinced that everything this simple old woman told me was true. Wealth and a guarded childhood, ship-wreck and a literal loss of the whole family fortune in the sea, a miraculous escape with life, an unexpected offer of marriage from a French seaman much older than herself, her acceptance of it as a duty to her family, years of exile in a foreign land with her children growing up French and a little ashamed of a shabby foreign mother, and through it all the thread of her longing for the native land from which she had been carried away as a baby,—it is hard to believe that this is truth and not fiction. But nowadays fiction has become very wary of coincidence and fate, and even of patriotism. Simply and honestly the life of this old woman had unfolded like an old-fashioned novel.

The great popularity of biography in recent years proves that grown-ups as well as children yearn for a "true story."

* Author of *Caddie Woodlawn* (Macmillan, 1935), and *Anything Can Happen on the River* (Macmillan, 1934), and editor of *Best Short Stories for Children*, published annually by Row, Peterson. This paper was prepared under the direction of the Book Evaluation Committee of the Children's Librarians' Section of the American Library Association, Miss Mildred English, Chairman.

We have gone deeply into the beauties of true human experience for adults, but for the most part we are still giving our children fiction. I don't want to suggest that we should rob children of fiction. More than adults they need a wide sweep of the imagination and the lift and thrill of high romance. But can we not give them that, and at the same time give them real characters and the poetry of real experience?

It is this good combination of fact and fancy which I have wished very much to achieve in my own books for children. The methods of approach are often quite diverse. In my first book, *Anything Can Happen On the River*, I had the background of a real trip which we had made in a motor boat up the Seine and Yonne rivers from Paris to Sens. There was the whole colorful background of French river life and a wealth of true details, but no plot. Since I wanted to make a romance and not a travel book, my plot must necessarily be fiction. In *Caddie Woodlawn* the problem was entirely reversed. I had a great mass of true reminiscences out of which to weave a plot, but I lacked a background. In this case the truest things were often the strangest, and fiction was obliged to stop the gaps with commonplaces instead of ornamenting them with filigree.

When I decided to write down these stories of my grandmother's pioneer childhood which had always pleased me so much, I realized that I must somehow get a visual background against which to work. I knew northern Wisconsin backwards and forwards and loved it very much, but I did not know the particular little district in the western part of the state where she had lived. So one weekend in May, when the wild cherries were in blossom and the hepaticas were opening in the woods, my husband and I drove down from our home in Minnesota to find my background.

It had been nearly seventy years since my grandmother had seen her childhood home and my only knowledge of its location was from her letters—"half a mile from Dunnville school"—"a turn in the road at the end of a long hill," etc. Being quite skeptical of these directions after seventy years, we went first to the county seat and looked up old tax records. Written in faded ink in a little old-fashioned ledger for the year 1865 was my great-grandfather's name and the description of the property. It was an easy matter then to trace the present owner and the location. It was still a farm and the present owner had had the place for fifty years. When we arrived we found the turn in the road at the end of a long hill, and measuring it off on the speedometer of a modern car, it was still exactly half a mile from Dunnville school.

I began to be excited. There were the woods, the river, the lake, the house, just as my grandmother had so often described them. But, no, they had built a bay window onto the house, and the big red barn was a smaller unpainted one, and the four pine trees were gone from in front of the house. But these were minor details. The grave of the little sister who had died so long ago was still on the hillside at the edge of the woods.

I suppose that no person in search of her ancestors in this changing Middle West was ever more fortunate than I. For what had been a small promising settlement in 1865 when traffic flourished on the river, is now a small stagnant settlement left high and dry by both river and railroad. To all intents and purposes it is still 1865 sitting dreamily in the midst of 1935. With growing delight we tramped "Caddie's" woods. There were the maple sugar and butternut trees, the wind flowers and anemones, and even a pair of cardinals, farther north than I have ever before seen them, but "Caddie" remembers that they used to nest there.

But the high spot of our journey into the past was our visit with an old settler who was on the other side of ninety. The farm which we had come to see had passed into his hands in 1875. Now he had divided it between his two sons, and he lived with a daughter in a nearby town. He sat on the porch in a wheel chair, rather deaf and pretty nearly blind, withdrawn thus from the exigencies of a modern world, but with a mind still sprightly and alive to the interesting things that had happened to him. It is not hard to imagine that his family had grown tired of his reminiscences after all these years, but here were we simply begging to be told. It was a golden opportunity for both parties.

He remembered my great-grandfather, although he had not known "Caddie," and he told me a great many anecdotes connected with the "massacre scare," many of which I was able to use in the book. He told me how one of the women had said to him: "It's all right for you young men to be calm. If the Indians come, you can get out in a hurry, because you have no families or stock dependent on you." He had replied: "Lady, if the Indians come, we young men will not be getting out in a hurry. We'll be here by your sides, fighting to the finish!" These words, which seemed to me quite thrilling as the old man said them, I put into the mouth of Robert Ireton in my book of *Caddie Woodlawn*.

We visited Eau Galle and the site of the early mill which my great-grandfather had helped to install when there were only three white families and a tribe of Indians in the town. An old man whose people had been in this part of the country since 1856 sat on the back platform of the present mill cracking butternuts and he also was glad to speak of his reminiscences.

On that sunny, adventurous week-end in search of a background for my grand-

mother's stories, I began to realize the debt we owe our children. We are the rather frail and forgetful link that connects them with the past. I suppose it would be difficult to pick out of all the history of the world a span of seventy years which has seen more change than the seventy years which have just passed in the Western and Mid-western United States. We have passed from the most primitive of pioneer existence to the most complicated and luxurious of urban life. The pine knots and home-dipped tallow candles which our grandmothers remember have given place to the most fantastic electrical illuminations; the oxcart and saddle horse have been superseded by the latest fancy of the automobile and airplane manufacturer; homespuns made from the wool off the backs of one's own sheep have become machine-made silks, rayons, cellophane. Almost everything that touches us today has undergone the same tremendous change, and this has happened in a single span of life. There are people living who can remember the difficulties and hardships, the dangers and pleasures of that time which seems to us now more simple and sincere than ours. Perhaps it was not really simpler and more sincere, but at least it was different, as different as two types of existence can well be.

How can we make our children see and understand this very different life, which, although they may not know it, is a part of their blood and bone and muscle? It is something which they should understand so that they can give modern life its true evaluation. It should be a part of their conscious minds as well as of the unconscious blood. It seems to me that we ought to go about to these old people who have known both lives before it is too late, and collect the true stories they remember and pass them on to our children. We must not be content to sit in our steam-heated houses and invent sentimentalized fiction

about Indians and pioneers, but we must go out to the old people who are still sitting on porches in the sun and say: "Tell us a story, please,—and make it a true one."

These stories need not be written down, but they must be kept alive. Sometimes I think that the best way to keep stories alive is not to bury them in books which are so soon out of date and lost on dusty library shelves, but to pass them along by word of mouth. Certainly my grandmother's stories came down to me with all the freshness and vigor of living things, and, if I have buried them in a book, it is only because I could never tell them so well by word of mouth. We are in danger of losing the art of oral narration nowadays. Among the other changes which our seventy years have seen, we have lost the artful old yarn-spinner in a blare of radio and jazz, newspaper headlines and illustrated magazines. We

haven't time any longer to sit quiet for a spell before the fire, and at last have a drawling voice commence: "You think you seen bears, do you? Wal, back in the spring of '48, I see one that put all others plumb in the shade . . ." A true story! The children sit up and draw in their breaths, as they have never done for any radio announcer in the world.

Thrilling things are happening today which deserve adequate telling. But, because of the great gap between today and pioneer yesterday, let us try very hard to keep hold of some of the sturdy realities of our grandfathers and mothers to hand down to our children. A consciousness of these things of the past, hand in hand with the privileges of the modern world, should better fit our children to meet the chaotic future. A good family story of courage and endeavor is a better heirloom than silver candlesticks.

CONTEMPORARY POETRY FOR CHILDREN

(Continued from page 9)

It looked at me with all its limbs;
It looked at me with all its bark.
The yellow wrinkles on its sides
Were bent and dark.

And then I ran to get away,
But when I stopped to turn and see,
The tree was bending to the side
And leaning out to look at me.

The child is often seized by this fear, but usually it is awe, mysterious but intense awe, rather than horror. When she looks at her baby brother ("A Child Asleep") she feels it. He was asleep, but "something in him looked at me."

And he was something like a cat
That is asleep, or like a dog;
Or like a thing that's in the woods
All day behind a log.

And then I was afraid of it,
Of something that was sleeping there.
I didn't even say his name,
But I came down the stair.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts' poetry for children is art, muted and unobtrusive, with undertones of the "eternal note of sadness" and overtones of spacious meanings. She is a sound child psychologist, though probably an intuitive one; and her points of view, her moods, emotions and imaginings are childlike. But she is primarily a literary artist, with firm power and delicate technique, her apparent artlessness concealing her artistry. I know no children's poet of our generation who can more frequently make the true magic.

(To be continued)

Are Reference Materials Important in the School Program?

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IT HAS become an accepted principle of education that the student of today needs more than the fundamental skills if he is to be able to take his place in a complex society. Conditions as we find them demand that he have a well-rounded, integrated personality; that he be able to live and work with other people of varying personalities; and that he realize his own unique abilities and what their contribution to the best welfare of society may be. Shorter working hours require that he develop definite standards and tastes in leisure activities. Above all he needs to be able to adapt himself readily to new conditions and to act on a basis of thorough understanding of all the facts or of the total situation.

Wide reading beyond the limits of textbooks contributes directly or indirectly to these ultimate aims of education. Surely a carefully planned program of reading which requires the use of reference materials, and which has as its purpose the solution of problems, the understanding of situations in which people have found themselves, or the making of decisions which are based upon information obtained, will train pupils in right habits of thinking and action. Such a program is finding its place particularly in the social studies field.

The ever increasing amount of worthwhile reference material that is being pub-

lished is making this more and more possible and practical. These books are being written simply and on a child's level of understanding. The information included is straightforward and can be relied upon as being accurate. There is still a need for such materials on many problems that are now being included in a majority of courses of study. There is also a great need for materials which take into account the varying abilities of children, which are written simply but not childishly, and which can be understood by children who are retarded in reading. However, with the books that are now available, and with a little ingenuity on the part of the teacher in supplementing materials of her own writing, all children can have the training and experiences which come from collecting and organizing information from a number of sources.

There are certain fundamental principles which should be kept in mind in carrying on a program of this kind. In the first place, the reading which is to be done should be centered around a problem or an activity which the children believe is worth-while and in which they are thoroughly interested. Children who are seeking information concerning the life of termites because the school building or their homes are being destroyed by them are much more vitally interested

in the reading than if the teacher had said, "The termite is one of the common insects. Wouldn't you like to find out about it today?"

The ultimate outcomes of such a reading program should be kept in mind. Slipshod, careless reading without a definite purpose is not to be desired. The children should grow in the ability to be accurate in the information which they obtain, in the ability to think clearly toward a definite goal, to draw clean-cut and unbiased conclusions and to work independently. Such habits do not result unless the teacher herself realizes what is to be attained, and is able to guide the children in their development.

The materials chosen for reading on any problem should be on the child's level of understanding. Much time and interest is lost when the vocabulary or organization of the books that are used is too difficult. The wise choice of references depends upon the teacher's thorough understanding of the reading abilities of her pupils at any given time. It also requires a knowledge of the difficulty of the reading matter that is available for a particular activity. It is comparatively easy to find reading matter for children of average or above average reading ability. It is not so easy for children who are retarded. Unless care is taken, these children become discouraged, losing interest.

There should be a realization that the majority of pupils do not gain skill in the use of reference materials without definite, specific training. It is not enough to choose material on the child's level and tell him to read it. Neither is it enough to train him in the use of one reference book such as an encyclopedia and expect him to be skillful in the use of *The World Almanac*. The children and teacher should realize that certain skills are needed for all types of reference works but that there are also certain skills that are needed for only one or two types. In

order to make this clear it may be well to enumerate some of the skills that need to be developed if successful use of reference books in the type of reading program described above is to be attained.

The general make-up of reference books is the same, that is, they all have a title page, a majority of them have a table of contents, a preface or introductory statement, and an index of some kind. The purpose of these various parts of a book is common to all types of books, but the exact arrangement of them varies. For example, some indices include only main topics, some include subtopics in outline form, while others include subtopics in paragraph form. After the children have learned the general purposes of the various parts of a book, specific training is needed so that they may work independently when they use one particular reference work such as *Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia*.

It should also be realized that reference books differ in the style and pattern of their content. Examination of a science reader, a history book, a geography text, *The World Almanac*, and *The World Book* will make this quite evident. Some of them use abbreviations peculiar to the subject or style of writing. Paragraph headings, chapter summaries, maps, graphs, and cross references are used in various ways. The pattern of the subject matter also varies. Science material is characterized by definite, clear statements of facts while historical material is more descriptive.

Gradually the pupils should be guided into the ability to choose books for a given topic. After reference books have been used for a number of problems, the pupils learn that certain of them will be more apt to contain material on a given topic than will others. They should be led to suggest which of the available books should be consulted first. A training period in which the children are asked to

write down the names of five books which they would use in order to find information on a given problem would be worth while. After each child has decided on his five books, a class discussion should follow in which the reasons for choices would be given, a check would be made to determine the value of these choices, and a class decision would be made. Thus, little by little, critical judgment in book selection would be formed.

Too many times teachers take the easiest way and baby the children by selecting all the references for them. Classrooms have been visited by the writer in which the reference table was piled with books that have been selected for the activities being carried on. In these are found slips of paper marking the places where the information is to be found. By doing this, the teacher is making the children dependent rather than independent; she is taking away opportunities for practice in the skill of using such aids as the table of contents and the index, as well as opportunities in the selection of books to be used. She is keeping the children on a lower level of accomplishment in the critical use of reference materials. It should be emphasized that this skill cannot be developed suddenly. The procedure will follow a well planned, step by step program in which the teacher realizes all the contributing skills and just what ultimate accomplishment is to be desired.

The development of a wise choice of books will lead into the ability to evaluate the worth-whileness of the content of various books and references. One fault of American citizenship today is the whole-hearted acceptance of whatever is seen on the printed page or of whatever is heard from the public platform. Surely the assembling of information on a problem offers splendid opportunities for reading critically and for examining what

the author has to say by always keeping in mind the question, "Is he in a position to know what he is talking about?" When children report on what they have read there is another excellent situation for training in critical judgment on the part of the children who are listening. Such questions as, "Did he get his information from a reliable source?" "Does it relate directly to the problem we are trying to solve?" "Have I some other information which contradicts his?" will stimulate not only the children who are listening, but also the person who is reporting.

Reading from various sources and collecting information on a given problem will necessarily involve the formation of summaries and conclusions. Without these, the reading has been the gathering of facts without organization. These summaries may take the form of written statements or of a culminating activity such as a play, an exhibit or a newspaper. Whatever the form, the conclusions made should be based upon accurate information and upon a knowledge of the whole situation rather than upon a smattering of facts and upon material that is half-true or without foundation of truth.

The accomplishment of these skills will need to be measured from time to time. Many of the new standardized tests of reading are including the measurement of such skills as the use of an index, the selection of the central thought of a paragraph, the prediction of outcomes, the ability to read maps, charts and graphs, and the knowledge of basic reference materials. This development is a recognition of the importance of the skills to be attained. However, these will need to be supplemented by informal tests of abilities which cannot be covered in the ordinary standardized tests. The teacher will then be able to determine just where the pupils are in the development of the more complex skills.

The Use of the Dictionary in the Elementary Grades

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THE MODERN elementary school has two major tasks in the education of children. First, the school must teach the child to master certain basic abilities, facts and skills which are necessary for successful living, such as the ability to read, the ability to write, and a knowledge of the fundamental processes of arithmetic. Second, the school must develop in the child the ability to find quickly and accurately additional facts needed. Preparation for the second type of ability is probably more important than the first. Knowledge is too vast for any one to attempt to know everything. Education can not even attempt the task of giving the pupil all of the facts which he will need for the solution of the problems he meets. Neither can the pupil anticipate the facts which he will need in the future. Students who cannot use intelligently such sources as dictionaries, indices, encyclopedias, glossaries, card catalogues, and tables of contents are greatly handicapped in the preparation of their school work as well as in the preparation for their later professional and vocational work.

The dictionary stands pre-eminent among the useful reference tools now commonly used in school and in life outside the school. By learning to use the dictionary the child acquires a technique which is of inestimable value throughout all of his life. Many children are discovering to their delight that the use of the dictionary need no longer be a fruitless

and discouraging labor, nor drill in its use a meaningless activity. Likewise, the teacher is finding an improved attitude toward a book which should be the most used on her desk and which oftentimes is least used.

Unfortunately, in far too many cases pupils who have graduated from the elementary and high school do not know how to interpret the material found in an ordinary school dictionary, much less the unabridged dictionary. The example of the college student who has not yet learned the order of the alphabet illustrates the inefficiency with which some approach the use of the dictionary. In many cases either the teachers themselves have failed to present dictionary study so that the pupil uses the dictionary in an ineffective manner, or our teaching materials have been so unsatisfactory that the pupil has not made adequate use of the dictionary as a tool.

Far too often the pupil does not enjoy using a dictionary. This has been partially occasioned by the unsatisfactory type of dictionary developed for children's use. At the present time new editions of children's dictionaries have eliminated many of the unsatisfactory conditions found in those used a few years ago. The skills and abilities necessary for the effective use of the dictionary may be analyzed as follows:

SKILLS INVOLVED IN THE USE OF THE DICTIONARY

1. The ability to find words when arranged alphabetically. The complete mastery of this skill

involves: (A) The ability to arrange the alphabet in a serial order from A to Z. (B) The ability to give one or two letters which come before and just after each letter of the alphabet. (C) The ability to group words according to the letter of the alphabet with which they begin. (D) The ability to group words alphabetically by their second, third, fourth letters and so on to the end of the word.

2. The ability to handle the dictionary as a book effectively. This involves: (A) The ability to open the dictionary quickly to the correct letter. (B) A knowledge of the purpose and location of the thumb index and how to use it. (C) A knowledge of the use of the guide words.

3. The ability to find out how to pronounce words. The complete mastery of this skill involves: (A) Understanding the division of words into syllables. (B) Interpreting and using the accent mark. (C) A knowledge of the meaning of the re-spellings. (D) A knowledge of the order of preferences in case two pronunciations are given. (E) A knowledge of the location and the ability to use the key to pronunciation. (F) Use of the key words at the bottom of the page. (G) The use of diacritical marks. (H) Knowledge of how pronunciations are determined.

4. The ability to use the dictionary to insure correct spelling. This skill necessitates: (A) A knowledge of the spelling of various sounds in order to find unfamiliar words. (B) A knowledge of the use of the hyphen. (C) A knowledge of how the plurals of words are formed. (D) A knowledge of how to locate compound words.

5. The ability to determine the meaning of the words. A complete mastery of this skill involves: (A) The ability to select the right meaning of the word. (B) A knowledge of how to find the most common meaning of a word. (C) The ability to determine the present status of a word. (D) The ability to find out about the origin of the word. (E) The ability to find synonyms for words. (F) Finding the meaning of prefixes and suffixes. (G) The ability to locate the definition of phrases. (H) The ability to locate derivatives of words. (I) The ability to locate compound words.

6. The ability to make use of various grammatical information. The development of this skill involves: (A) A knowledge of the meaning of parts of speech. (B) A knowledge of the meaning of the principal parts of a verb. (C) A knowledge of the comparison of adjectives and adverbs.

7. The ability to use the information from the pages in the front and back of dictionaries. This material contains such matters as: (A) Pronunciation of geographical and biographical names. (B) Pronunciation of foreign words and phrases. (C) Tables of weights and measures and other valuable information depending upon the edition of the dictionary.

Most authorities are agreed that pupils need a systematic and interesting training in the use of the dictionary if effective learning is to take place. Most courses of study call for the introduction of the actual study of the dictionary in the middle grades of the elementary school. Primary teachers have prepared the way in many school systems by teaching the child the order of the alphabet. The author does not know of any study in which the grade placement of the various skills and abilities has been scientifically determined. It is obvious that the simplest and most basic skills should be taught first. The pupil must know the sequential arrangement of the alphabet before he can even find the words. The exact grade location of certain skills will depend upon the particular course of study followed; i.e. pupils will have little occasion to use the grammatical information before they make use of such material in their English work. It is exceedingly important that teachers and supervisors of the school system see that the pupils in a given school should systematically be taught all of the skills and abilities necessary for effective dictionary study sometime during their school work.

Space does not permit the complete development of all of the skills mentioned here. A few illustrations are given of techniques which may be used in teaching certain dictionary skills.

1. Arrange groups of words in alphabetical order, and give the reason for the arrangement. For example, the pupil is given the words *booklet*, *belong*; he is ex-

pected to reverse the order, and explain that he did so because *E* precedes *O*.¹

2. Divide such words as *congratulate*, *museum*, *temperature*, into syllables with the aid of a dictionary.

3. The pupil is asked to specify the right- and left-hand guide word, between which each of a given list of words is found in the dictionary.

4. Pronounce a list of words, each of which has two meanings indicated by a different pronunciation, such as *con' test*, *con test'*; *ob' ject*, *ob' ject'*.²

5. A word which has a number of distinct meanings, such as *fast*, is used in a group of sentences, each sentence illustrating one meaning. The pupil is asked to rewrite the sentences, substituting a definition for the repeated word. Thus, The sign was nailed *fast*, might become, The sign was nailed *tightly*.³

6. Questions such as: What letter follows immediately after *S*? What letter comes immediately before *L*? Does *P* come before or after *T*? should be an-

swered without reference to the dictionary.³

In teaching the use of the dictionary the teacher should remember that:

1. The pupil should be introduced to dictionary study by carefully graduated steps, just as in learning any complex skill.

2. One use of the dictionary should be taught at a time, but ultimately all uses appropriate to the grade should be taught.

3. Dictionary drill should be made meaningful by connecting it with the other subjects in the curriculum.

4. Dictionary drill should be made interesting by providing variety in the type of learning exercise used.

5. Children should be given many opportunities to use the new words which they have learned.

6. The dictionary habit should be developed by the teacher; the children should see her consult the dictionary frequently.

¹ Lewis, Matthews, Woody, and Palmer. *Adventures in Dictionary Land*. Book Three. American Book Co., 1932.

² Powell, Frank V. *Better Dictionary Work Habits*. G. and C. Merriam, 1935.

³ Hall, N. H. *Everyday Use of the Alphabet*. Hall and McCreary, 1928.

Twelfth Night-Song

HERE'S to thee, old apple tree
 Whence thou may'st bud
 And whence thou may'st blow!
 And whence thou may'st bear apples enow!
 Hatsfull, capsfull,
 Bushel, bushel sacksfull,
 And my pockets full too, Huzza!

—Traditional, from Devonshire.

Quoted from *Happy Holidays*,

by Eleanor Graham. E. P. Dutton, 1933.

A Bibliography of Unpublished Studies in Elementary School English, 1925-1934

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH OF THE
NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RESEARCH IN ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL ENGLISH

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(Continued from December)

EDITOR'S NOTE: The first installment of Miss MacLatchy's report appeared in the December, 1935, issue of *THE REVIEW*. In it, Miss MacLatchy gave the bibliography of the studies she analyzes here. Parenthetical numbers following the names of authors refer to studies in this bibliography.

In the Primary Grades

Oral English receives predominant emphasis among the studies in the primary grades. Several investigations of special interest were made at the University of Iowa through the use of an electrical recording device by which the actual comments of the children were recorded as they were made.² Courses of study and textbooks have been examined in the search for the types of activities in oral and written composition in the first three grades.

The oral language habits of eighteen children ranging in ages from three to seven were studied by Miss Newkirk (77). From a painstaking record of their conversation during meals and while at play she concluded that the preponderance of errors made by the children were errors in speech, such as eliding "ing,"

rather than grammatical errors. She found no relation between intelligence and errors, but she found that the following verbs were involved in most of the errors: "break," "come," "did," "draw," "fall," "got" (using "have"), "give," "know," "learn," "make," "saw," "set," "sit," "throw," "wish," "write."

The electrically transcribed records of an October and a May oral English lesson in the first grade were compared by Miss Kiefer (43). She concluded that the children's errors in English were individual. She believed that a child's language pattern may be identified in the first grade, and she suspected a high correlation between reading ability and ability to construct sentences.

Miss Payne (56) examined eight state courses of study—Idaho, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, and North Dakota—to find references to the teaching of paragraphing in the elementary grades. The most common suggestion was that paragraphs of two or three sentences be used in first grade language and paragraphs of three- or four-sentence lengths be used in the second and third grades. Compositions of more than one paragraph were not advised in the primary grades.

² Greene, Harry A. "Research in Elementary English: A Report of Problems and Progress." C. C. Certain, Box 67, North End Sta., Detroit, Mich.

Upon an examination of twenty-three city courses of study and two state courses of study, published between 1917 and 1926, Miss Everett (19) found that the writers of the courses of study were agreed upon the recreatory activities in English for grades one to three, but they did not agree on the work type. Many of the courses were still based upon the traditional curriculum. She concluded that "the objectives of the National Committee on English" were far ahead of the practices in the primary grades. Miss Goldenberg (25) developed a series of twenty-five lessons to supplement the Louisiana course of study in grades one and two. Miss Ford (21), after a detailed examination of the courses of study of fourteen southern states, found that in the first grade English tended to be 100 per cent oral; this proportion decreased 10 per cent in the second grade; and 20 per cent in the third.³

Two studies of pre-third grade English were made at the University of Iowa. Mr. Friest (22) from an analysis of five city courses of study, five textbooks, and five work books gathered 753 specific skills suggested in the books examined. He found little uniformity among the skills suggested in the different sources, and little similarity as to grade-placement. There was some agreement regarding skills in the textbooks and work books, but little relation between textbooks and courses of study. After a preliminary analysis of the content of nine courses of study, eight textbooks, and one monograph, Miss Brainard (9) drew up a list in which were named skills in oral and written expression which were to be found in pre-third grade language instruction. This list was checked by 219 teachers in different parts of the country, and from this checking Miss Brainard drew up a list of skills which from consensus should be stressed in pre-third grade language. The

oral and written language skills desirable for first grade follow:

A. Oral Expression

1. Use of polite forms: "please," "excuse me," "thank you," "good morning," and "good night."
2. Say "yes," and "no," and "what" instead of "yep," etc.
3. Express ideas clearly.
4. Recognize statements and questions.
5. Use "I have no book," or "I haven't a book" correctly.

B. Written Expression

1. Ability to copy words and sentences.
2. Ability to write a simple announcement of a program, giving clearly time, place, and purpose.
3. Ability to write several short sentences about one thing.
4. Ability to write the date, after finding it on the calendar.
5. Periods after numbers indicating number of reading question or word of spelling list.

Miss Horton (37) set up standards for spoken and written English. Her outline for oral work included spontaneous self-expression, cultivation of language, correct habits of speech, drill through language games, entertainments for special days, and a classroom store. She suggested that the written work be limited to copying words, single simple sentences, the capital *I*, and the pupil's own name.

Miss McIntire (48) drew up a developing course of study in written composition for the third grade. The activities of the children gave the starting point; every effort was made to keep the course flexible and practical.

In an effort to determine the forms of written language which third grade children prefer, Miss Coleman (14) analyzed the 2,598 pieces of creative writing done by 67 pupils in three consecutive third grades in the Training School of East Texas State Teachers College. She found 46 per cent, stories; 43 per cent, letters; 1 per cent, plays; and 10 per cent, poems. Stories seemed the preferred form. The pupils wrote upon nature, children, and personal experience. Little difference

³ See also, Masters' theses by Frances A. Laughlin and Anna Marie Goldsmith, Greene, *op. cit.*

in topics of interest was shown by the boys and the girls. The children with high intelligence quotients seemed interested in a wider variety of things than the children of lower intelligence.

Miss Anderson (2) found the average number of words per sentence in letters spontaneously written by second grade pupils was 8 words, and by third grade pupils was 9 words. The percentages of simple sentences were 74 and 70 for the two grades, those of complex sentences were 12 and 18, and those of compound were 14 and 12. Eighty-four per cent of the sentences written by second grade pupils were declarative; the corresponding percentage for the third grade was 87.

Miss Poor (57) attempted to discover the nature of the rhythmic responses of primary children and their relation to achievement in reading. She found that the relations between physical activity and speech, physical activity and music, rhythm and speech all showed high correlations, while the correlation between rhythm and reading was not significant. Rhythmic language, regardless of meaning, was an end in itself with the seventeen young children studied by Miss Sessions (61). It was often accompanied by movement, and it fell into the following patterns: repetition, accent, prolongation of vowel sound, and changes in phonetic sound, volume, pitch, and tempo. Miss Fitzgerald (20) found that, while maturity of reading in the primary grades includes the element of rhythm indicated by rapid rate, the maturity of language ability could not be determined by the rate of speaking. That was an indication of personality and training. Miss Marshall (51) contrasted with two small first grade groups the daily use of poetry and of word study as a means of increasing comprehension. She found the poetry group made a slightly greater gain in vocabulary test, but gained much in understanding of the words and phrases used in poetry.

Intermediate Grades

LANGUAGE

Miss Harris (33) proposed to determine how and to what extent the structural components of language, parts of speech, and types of sentences differ in the written composition from the reading materials assigned to the various levels of the elementary school. The readers of five series were analyzed to determine the average number of words per sentence, the frequencies of various parts of speech, and the proportion of various sorts of sentences. Compositions were obtained from 206 pupils in the six grades of the Skinner Elementary School at Chicago, and these were analyzed to determine the average length of sentence, type of sentence, and distribution of parts of speech. In the readers and the children's compositions the sentences were characterized by a growing degree of complexity at successive age-levels. The greatest change in both types of material occurs in the first three grades. The proportion of complex sentences is greater grade by grade, and the proportion of simple sentences smaller in reading material than in the compositions. The proportion of the parts of speech change in both reading material and compositions as the grades advance: the proportion of verbs and pronouns decreases and the proportion of nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and conjunctions increases. By the end of the first six grades the proportionate change in parts of speech is greater in the reading material than it is in the children's compositions. The author draws several conclusions from these findings: First, that the development of reading ability is partly the development of the ability to understand sentences of increasing length and complexity. Second, power in composition is a development in the ability to construe sentences of increasing length and complexity. Third, reading ability makes more rapid strides in the first six grades than does ability in composition

when the two are measured by the same standard.

Miss Anderson (2) found that sentence structure in children's letters grows more elaborate, and the types are less varied as the children advance from grade to grade. She analyzed 704 letters containing 8,189 sentences written by 620 children in grades two to six. She found that in grade two the average number of sentences was 8; in grade three, 9; in grade four, 15; in grade five, 13; and in grade six, 16. The increased complexity in form was shown by the following percentages:

	Simple Sentence	Complex Sentence	Compound Sentence
Grade 2	74	12	14
Grade 3	70	18	12
Grade 4	66	16	18
Grade 5	61	20	19
Grade 6	60	21	19

There is a small increase in the use of declarative sentences as the grades advance—84 per cent in grade one to 88 per cent in grade six. The questions decrease from 13 to 8 per cent; the imperative sentences increased slightly from 3 to 4 per cent; and the exclamatory sentences used in .1 per cent of the sentences by the children of second and third grades disappeared altogether from the themes written by the pupils of the three higher grades.

Miss Shepherd (63) found in fourth, sixth, seventh, tenth, and twelfth grades of the University School, University of Chicago, that mature pupils tend in their written work to subordinate or coordinate closely related statements in ways which clarify the relationship, while immature pupils tend to make no combinations in a large percentage of instances.

Miss Healy (36) compared the ratings given to pupils' compositions by 50 sixth grade teachers of Baltimore with the ratings assigned to the same compositions by three trained scorers using the Nassau

County supplement to the Hillegas scale, and she decided that form seemed a more potent factor to teachers and received more weight in their judgments than did quality.

Miss Hall (30) found in the seventh grade that pupils' appraisals of their own compositions is more effective in eliminating errors in language and in promoting progress in general composition ability and spelling than is the teacher's appraisal. Mr. Willing (74) concludes from his test survey of the pupils in nineteen schools of Denver that at present there is no reliable and comparable measure of accomplishment in composition.

A determination of sixth grade pupils' responses to a check list of 193 theme titles gathered from the Winnetka Book List, current textbooks, and the New York syllabus was made by Mr. Vogel (73), in which he showed that the check list was a valuable device. The topics of greatest interest to the pupils were leisure activities, travel, imaginative narration, animals, personal experiences, and athletics. The six of least interest were civics, art, getting rich, proverbs, people, and children.

Mr. Tanruther (67) gathered 319 devices for teaching written composition from an analysis of six recently published sets of textbooks for elementary-school English. The most commonly used devices were: (1) Copying—to acquire the skills of capitalization, letter-writing, punctuation, and choice of words. (2) Writing dictation—to teach capitalization, punctuation, sentence sense, and sentence structure. (3) Following a model—to teach form and letter writing. (4) Filling in blanks—to teach choice of words and language usage. (5) Assigning a subject—to teach explanation, outlining, paragraph sense and structure, reports. (6) Writing sentences—to develop sentence sense, language usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling. (7) Selecting topics—to teach story telling and sentence sense

and structure. (8) Playing games and guessing riddles—to teach composition. Choice of words, punctuation, and spelling are taught largely from grades two to five. Capitalization, though taught throughout, receives greatest emphasis in the lower grades. The use of the dictionary, though used throughout, is taught in the fourth grade. Sentence sense and structure are most emphasized in grades five and six. Description, explanation, news writing, and outlining are taught in grades six, seven, and eight. Language usage is taught throughout with increasing emphasis as the grades advance, while sentence sense and sentence structure, and story telling are also present in the material presented to every grade.

In an effort to gather a list of theme topics of interest to the children of the elementary-school grades, Miss Gross (29) analyzed 1,064 letters written by children in the eight grades of the elementary school. She found 709 raw topics, of which 577 appeared less than five times, and she examined each of the remaining 132 topics which had higher frequencies than five to get its exact setting. She next examined the 30 textbooks of ten series and tabulated the 110 raw topics with a frequency of five or more mentions suggested there by the same plan. She concluded "there is little agreement between the topics discussed by children in the letters they write and the topics proposed for themes in the textbooks," for she found but 40 topics common to both lists, and their frequencies seldom were similar.

Miss Hannah (32) found that sixth grade children when asked to list topics which they would wish to discuss with a friend or to write about mentioned a wide list of activities—384 were mentioned and 204 were written upon—it is "the thing that a child knows or is able to do that he likes to write about." She found in examining textbooks that 40 per cent

of the topics suggested in them were also suggested by the children.

Miss Dammrich (16) found that children of foreign parentage and children of lower physical and mental vitality did better work in written language when they were encouraged to recount their own experiences or discuss their own interests. Miss Duncan (18) found in purposeful letter writing, such as is possible in an activity program, that "children do achieve certain standards of form without being restricted to cramped, stereotyped expression." Miss Humphreys (39) found the social situation is superior to the artificial situation in teaching letter writing in the fifth grade, and that a sufficient number of social situations can be found without difficulty in the life of the group. Miss Sanders (60) found that work on the school newspaper stimulated the language activities of fifth grade pupils, and that during the five months studied the pupils' progress measured by standardized tests ranged from eight months to two years one month. Miss Mueller (53) was unable to determine that socialized recitation resulted in such outcomes as increased initiative, greater power of leadership, finer spirit of co-operation, and other socially desirable attitudes. Mr. Ash (3) found that "it pays to spend more time on the stylistic phases of composition (in grades seven and eight) and less on the grammatical." Mr. Boeh (7) by an experimental-control technique found that pupils in the seventh and eighth grades whose English work was presented as an activity made more progress in formal English subjects, showed more improvement in English expression, applied the knowledge acquired in English more generally to other subjects, and far outstripped the control group taught by traditional methods.

Miss Koehler (45), after examining 35 scientific studies in language and grammar which have been published, con-

(Continued on page 28)

An Enriched Course in Reading for Grade Six

ANNA PAYNE
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(Continued from December)

THE SECOND object in our reading program is to develop appreciation. At first the teacher planning a course of study is a little baffled by the intangibility of the task. It is like trying to sew the summer breezes to the walls of your house to protect yourself against the winter. The reaction against the initial feeling of despair is the comforting reflection that so subtle a quantity as appreciation is something all human beings absorb in much the same thoughtless manner that they draw air into their lungs. All the teacher can hope to do is expose the class to the best literature, and by a chemical process appreciation will result.

It is true that appreciation is hard to gauge because it is an emotional quality, and in no part of their make-up do individuals differ so radically as in emotional reaction. On the other hand we know that it is possible to stir the emotions in certain definite and legitimate ways; that once stirred, emotional drive has a very great educational value; and that the greatest teachers are those who have been able to turn the emotional force of a student into channels leading to a notable increase in that student's mental and moral stature. Once focus a man's emotion, and he will reach his destiny instead of scattering his energy along the way-side.

A study of the pupil's interests gives us insight into his emotional make-up and a guide to the best way to use them for his education. Klapper gives us a good pic-

ture of what children bring to literature. He lists a desire for a wider world and a yearning for experiences outside of the child's immediate environment.¹² This urge toward new horizons is inherent in all growth. Klapper adds a love for the beautiful, a love of a story for its own sake and reemphasizes the tendency toward hero worship which he elaborates by explaining that the child is continually looking for someone to whom he can pin his faith. While he is too young to understand the elements of character, he nevertheless sees them concrete in his heroes.¹³

In response to these interests he goes on to say that a literary masterpiece makes concrete and personal ethical principles that in themselves are abstract and impersonal. It provides further a powerful and salutary means of stirring the emotions. "Psychology tells us," says Klapper, "that no two conflicting emotions can control the mind at once. One or the other obtains mastery. Awaken a noble desire or feeling, and a base one immediately dies. Pity will at once banish hate, confidence expels fear, admiration kills treachery."¹⁴ Appreciative reading of good literature, thus, brings an emotional cleansing. Its benefits are ethical as well as aesthetic.

To children of this age level and interests the study of the Middle Ages—colorful, heroic, tinged with the legendary and representing a type of life remote

¹² Klapper, P. *Teaching Children to Read*, p. 329.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

from their own—is admirably suited. My first step in the development of appreciation is to try to add to the intellectual narrative of historical facts a feeling for the people and times through an integrated reading program; to present ideals of loyalty, fortitude and pure living concretely in the great Medieval figures and to awaken a comradeship with the people in the various walks of life by a more intimate knowledge of their environment and point of view. After consulting a number of reading lists I have tentatively outlined the following program:

A. Legendary period: Pyle, H., *Story of King Arthur and his Knights*

Because Minnie Earl Sears recommends it for its delicacy and simplicity.¹⁵

Plan: To read in class the portions with which the children are least familiar.

B. Reign of Charlemagne, 768-814: "The Song of Roland" in Mary MacGregor's *Story of France*

Because Mrs. MacGregor presents her narrative with striking vigor and has condensed the account to the battle in the Valley of Thorns. Also because it is a story treating legendary French material as the Arthur stories treat legendary England.

Plan: In reading, compare the English and French versions of chivalry.

C. The Crusades, 1096-1300: Younge, Charlotte, *The Prince and the Page*

Described by Sears as "a tale of the last Crusade, telling how a faithful page gave his life for Prince Edward."¹⁶

D. Reign of Edward III, 1327: Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather* and Porter, J., *Scottish Chiefs*

Because both are classics of spirited narrative treating real men of action worthy of twelve-year-old admiration.

Program: Cover such episodes as relate to the historical events in the basic text for purpose of adding color to it.

E. The Guilds: Lamprey, L., *Masters of the Guild or In the Days of the Guild*

Described by Terman and Lima as "Stories of the Middle Ages in England in which the adventures of the wood-carver's son and the shoemaker's boy are woven into history without losing their flavor of reality and historic truth."¹⁷

F. The Middle Ages in Germany: Pyle, H., *Otto of the Silver Hand*

Recommended by Terman and Lima as "the most vivid and absorbing of all historical narratives suitable for children's reading."¹⁷ It gives a picture of Germany, whereas most of the reading is connected with England.

Program: Spend three or four weeks reading this in class with the possibility of dramatization.

G. Fifteenth Century: Pyle's *Men of Iron*

Terman and Lima call it "a very picturesque tale of court life and chivalry in the reigns of Henry IV and V, 1400-1418."

Program: Same as for *Otto of the Silver Hand*. Use whichever seems most suitable for the class.

In connection with the work on Medieval subjects the reading of current periodicals to keep in touch with the latest contributions is of value. The children should be encouraged to collect clippings and pictures dealing with topics that have been discussed in class. A valuable group activity involves the making of a class scrap book. It might deal with the general topic, "The Middle Ages" and be divided into chapters on various phases—Medieval architecture, the guilds, life in a castle, the Medieval manor, etc.—each child working up the phase in which he is most interested. If interest tends to die out, the project should not extend over three or four weeks, but if the children seem enthusiastic, it might be broadened into a history book compiled by the class, containing not only clippings but chapters and illustrations written by the children themselves. It offers endless opportunities for individual creative work and for co-operation between members of the group.

Dramatization offers perhaps the greatest opportunities for individual initiative and co-operative activity. It involves so many types of work that the most heterogeneous group of able and dull pupils usually finds itself united in a common interest, each worker busily engaged in a completely satisfying individual job. Short programs should be attempted soon after school opens to test the children's possibilities and give them confidence in their own powers. Most groups enjoy di-

¹⁵ Sears, M. E. *Children's Catalogue*.

¹⁶ Sears, M. E. *Children's Catalogue*.

¹⁷ Terman and Lima. *Children's Reading*.

viding into teams, and working independently of the teacher, providing a ten-minute entertainment for the class to be given the last period on Friday. These often take the form of radio programs, two or three people telling a story, or a short skit involving the entire team. It is not unusual for imaginative children to provide entertainment of genuine excellence.

By January first the children should have had sufficient preliminary practice to be ready for a more ambitious undertaking—the dramatization of some of the stories they had read. Short and effective scenes may be assembled from the materials found in some of the simpler ballads. Most of the dialogue is contained in the ballad itself, so that staging is the main problem confronting the class. From this they may go on to the more difficult task of selecting dramatic scenes from a story they have read as *Otto of the Silver Hand*, condensing it so that their play will contain the whole story, and writing the dialogue. The subsequent costuming, staging, and acting will call into play the creative ability of every member of the class. The writing of a successful original play is a good deal to expect of sixth grade pupils, but is an excellent alternative if such material appears in the creative writing of any of the members of the class.

Inasmuch as any unit of study, however excellent, defeats its own end as it approaches the saturation point, the program of Medieval reading will be most effective when combined with a variety of reading in unrelated fields. The remedial program provides relief of an active nature in the games I have described. Further variety may be provided by outside reading. To urge the dull pupils to read more extensively and to direct the interests of the avid readers so that they may not sink into one channel—cowboy, or pirate, or adventure stories, to the exclusion of all else—a directed course in

outside reading is effective. Each pupil should be required to finish at least one book a month in addition to his class preparation and should report on it orally, in writing or by making an illustration or cover design. Extra incentive may be given for reading beyond the minimum requirement. The program should further provide for broadening the scope of the pupils' interest. Credit should be given for reading of only *one* book of a particular type and only *one* book of a particular series. Many children become involved in one of the series dealing with the adventures of the boy campers, the boy pilots, etc., and read nothing else for months at a time. One device to insure more extensive choice is to put up a chart with headings listing various types of reading—adventure, animal, biography, history, travel—and let each child write his name and the title of the book he has read on completing the assignment.

No program is complete which omits the reading of poetry, but too often first poetic contacts are spoiled for children because the teacher has made an injudicious selection of material. Children enjoy poetry which expresses feelings that they themselves have experienced, but in many cases the writer of children's poetry fails because he no longer remembers exactly how he felt at a certain age. Another mistake is to choose poems about children in which the author allows himself to sentimentalize a little. The safest choice is poetry of action and heroism, poetry that tells a story, poetry containing the element of suspense, poetry in which there is rhyme and movement. Nonsense, too, is good for psychological kinks, and few people throw themselves more wholeheartedly into the enjoyment of it than children. Poems representing these qualities are "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," Noyes' "The Highwayman," a large group of traditional ballads and most of Scott's ballads, and

Carroll's "You Are Old, Father William," and "The Walrus and the Carpenter."

This program made an interesting experiment with a small sixth grade group last year. A Stanford Achievement Test administered in September showed them to be above average in reading ability, for while the median chronological age was ten years, seven months, the median reading age was twelve years, six months. At the end of May another form of the same test placed the median reading age at fifteen years, six months—a gain of three complete years during the school session of a hundred and seventy days.

Notable was the improvement of three years and ten months of a little boy whose reading progress had previously been retarded by faulty vision. Instead of a mass of collateral reading he was given short selections, each containing a definite problem. He conducted many researches and

became so enthusiastic that by the end of the year he was selecting excellent books for his private amusement. Of interest, too, is the child who made the least improvement—seven months. Somewhat frail in health, he could hardly be persuaded to finish a book. Toward the end of the year success with several problems showed him that reading can be fun. He has laid the groundwork for future adventures with books.

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A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF UNPUBLISHED STUDIES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENGLISH, 1925-1934

(Continued from page 24)

cluded that "the details of language have been emphasized out of all proportion to their importance . . . Little thought has been given to a satisfactory language environment. Practical efficiency has been emphasized; artistry and creative work have been ignored. Current practice is not in accord with modern educational theory . . . small concern has been given marginal learning; namely, attitudes, ideals, and interests." Language teachers who have read professional periodicals should not live in the benighted state described by Miss Koehler, for Miss Chapman (12) in her analysis of the content of 149 articles published in the *English Journal* found an increased regard for the limitations and interests of individual students, and for social procedures in class.

There is increased emphasis upon oral expression and on the functional use of grammar, while the interest in rhetoric is waning.

Miss Alexander (1) developed a curriculum in English which would interlock the language skills developed previous to the sixth year with those added that year. Miss Tennant (68) summarizes her examination of courses of study, textbooks, and books on the teaching of English by the statement that standards have not been lowered but broadened.

The 302 difficulties in language teaching reported by the teachers of one Kentucky county were classified by Mr. Galloway (24) into three groups; those pertaining to method, to objectives, and miscellaneous.

(To be continued)

A Course of Study in Creative Writing for the Grades

Organization Strands and Form Units with Suggested Activities

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(Continued from December)

II. INSPIRATIONAL WRITING

A. VERSE WRITING

1. *Activities:* To interpret varied musical selections appropriately in many different ways, such as leaping, hopping, skipping, pivoting, galloping, swaying, walking, marching, etc.

Objective: To develop a feeling for physical rhythms; to distinguish between the gavotte, the mazurka, six-eight time, and light measures as interpreted bodily by dancing.¹⁰

2. *Activity:* To listen to the reading of many types of poetry, and to memorize some of the poems whose meter makes a strong appeal.

Objective: To build up a strong background of poetry experience.

3. *Activities:* To read the older poets and memorize literally scores of poems; to clothe in imitation all weaker talents or to replace missing talent; to supply an artistic medium for whatever originality and individuality manifests itself.¹¹

Objective: To give children a vehicle of expression for the poetic spirit that is part of early youth.

4. *Activity:* To take part in an informal verse-speaking choir, interpreting a poem suitable for an audience of primary or kindergarten children—"Ding Dong Bell," "Three Little Kittens," etc.¹²

Objective: To gain freedom in expression; to develop rhythmic imagination.

5. *Activity:* To take part in an informal verse-speaking choir composed of members of the class, interpreting a poem suitable for the intermediate grades such as Lindsay's "Dirge for a Righteous Kitten," or "The Turtle," or A. A. Milne's "The King's Breakfast," or the Twenty-third Psalm, the choir to recite before invited guests from other grades.

Objective: To gain freedom in expression; to develop rhythmic imagination.¹²

6. *Activity:* After listening to the reading of many poems by living poets, adult and juvenile, to select a suitable theme and "word paint" it on a seasonal background (Christmas, Halloween, etc.)¹³

Objectives: To eradicate the belief that the poets are all dead, and that poetry is a thing apart from the actualities of life; to guard against commonplace rhyming; to adopt the arrangement of words and phrases to an appropriate flowing meter.

7. *Activity:* To listen frequently to poetry read aloud—lyrical and ballad forms—selections from Christina Rossetti, Robert Louis Stevenson, A. A. Milne, Hilda Conkling as given in the best modern anthologies of poetry for young people.¹⁴

Objective: To enrich the speech for creative composition; to give emotional perception; to give children the literary experience

¹⁰ Corinne Brown. *Creative Drama in the Lower School*. Appleton.

¹¹ H. Caldwell Cook. *The Perse Playbooks*.

¹² "Choral Speaking with Children." Carrie Rasmussen. *THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW*, November, 1933, Vol. X, No. 9.

¹³ Pauline R. Powers. "Original Verse Writing for Children." *THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW*, November, 1929, Vol. VI, No. 9.

¹⁴ Merrill and Fleming. *Op. cit.*

of hearing, repeatedly, cadences, rhythms, and rhymes.

8. *Activity*: To listen to MacDowell's tone version of the fairy tale of "The Tailor and the Bear," or his tone version of Joel Chandler Harris's "Uncle Remus."¹⁵

Objective: To bring the aural imagination and the visual into closer union; to stimulate aural reminiscences through tone.

9. *Activity*: To sing several ballads in the class room, such as "Sir Patrick Spens," "Chevy Chase," "Wraggle Taggle Gypsies," and others, for enjoyment and entertainment.¹⁵

Objective: To illustrate and induce the mood of poetry through music.

*10. *Activity*: To write verse appropriate for set occasions, in response to high developed situations, e.g. to write rhythmical, rhyming Valentine verses to mail in the Valentine mail boxes in a lower grade classroom, or to write Mother's Day verses to be taken home.

Objective: To acquire poise in creative expression; to write with restraint and in good taste under highly stimulating circumstances.

11. *Activity*: To have a poetry party when everybody who comes is prepared to read aloud a poem from a book which he brings with him.

Objective: To take an author's viewpoint of communication; to make poetry a source of enjoyment; to store away for subconscious associations, the rhythms and phrasing of poetry.¹⁶

12. *Activity*: To write spring verse to music for Maypole dances.

Objectives: To observe closely and accurately, aspects of spring; to describe each briefly but adequately in a phrase (while the teacher writes the phrases on the board); to listen to music of old English dances on the phonograph or radio; to fashion, from the material on spring, words which will fit the music rhythmically.

13. *Activity*: To write a fourth stanza to Masfield's "Cargoes."

Objectives: To discover from the teacher-critic, what is best in attempts at writing poetry.¹⁷

B. PROSE

*1. *Activity*: To read easy books to each other or to a small group of children in a third grade room.

Objectives: To become familiar with other books than the regular reading books; to acquire a larger vocabulary.

*2. *Activity*: To write legends for posters prepared by the art department for Mother's Day, Arbor Day, Safety First Week, Kindness to Animals drives, etc.

Objectives: To write in artistic response to an outward appeal or sentiment; to write creatively under a mood induced by some occasion or cause.

3. *Activity*: To write a series of words and phrases giving definite ideas or reflecting moods and emotions, on the following: six pictures of happiness, six pictures of misery, pleasant things to think about on a hot day, pleasant things to think about on a cold day, and others. Follow preliminary reading of these lists by discussion of words and phrases from Stevenson, Lewis Carroll, and others. Children then make other lists of words "in form or in sound appropriate for some particular sensation, thought, or emotion."¹⁸

Objectives: To improve style; to write succinctly "expressing single ideas or emotions, little cameo-like pictures"; to refine expression; to enlarge vocabulary.

4. *Activity*: To write brief, original stories suggested by pictures clipped from magazines; to collect and edit these stories for a scrap book for the library-table.

Objectives: To stimulate imagination through visual materials; to let children give a free rein to fancy; to encourage careful copy-reading of manuscripts; to use critical sense in selecting and arranging material in scrap book.

5. *Activity*: To write stories about toys.

Objectives: To read to children, and encour-

¹⁵ "Music and Literature," Anne E. Pierce. *THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW*, June, 1932. Vol. IX, No. 6.

¹⁶ Sarah M. Cleghorn, in Hartman and Shumaker. *Op. cit.*

¹⁷ Katherine A. Barber, in Hartman and Shumaker. *Op. cit.*

¹⁸ George Mackaness. *Op. cit.*

age them to read the many excellent toy stories—*Pinnocchio*, Margery Williams Bianco's *Poor Cecco*, and *The Adventures of Andy*, Rachel Field's *Hitty*, and others; to gain skill in narrative; to select colorful and appropriate words; to copy-read and revise manuscripts.

6. *Activity*: To prepare slips of paper which give, "in a couple of lines, a 'stunning opening for a story'"; and then to exchange the slips and write the story suggested.

Objectives: To secure imaginative release; to write under the excitement of a stirring situation.¹⁸

C. DRAMATIZATION AND PLAY WRITING

1. *Activity*: To act out rhymes and jingles from Mother Goose.¹⁹

Objective: To give dramatic expression to art appreciation.

2. *Activity*: To sing Mother Goose rhymes antiphonally.¹⁹

Objectives: To get the spirit of dialogue, to sense drama in the rhymes.

3. *Activity*: To dramatize a single character from Mother Goose extemporaneously before the class, one pupil at a time, each in turn.

Objectives: To overcome shyness in self-expression; to portray character by dramatic means; to learn to use speech with ease and freedom.

4. *Activity*: To dramatize a folk version of Little Red Riding Hood for the entertainment of class mates.¹⁹

Objectives: To give experience in creating emotion in an audience—in this case, a sense of fear; to give the vicarious sense of fear, and inure the audience to it; to control mood through drama.

5. *Activity*: To extemporize a dramatization (in the fourth grade) of the scene, read aloud from the *Iliad*, where Odysseus and Diomedes creep spying to the Trojan lines, and on the way meet Dolon, a Trojan spy, kill him, visit the Trojans, then return unharmed to their own camp.²⁰

¹⁸ Merrill and Fleming. *Op. cit.*

¹⁹ Teachers of the Shady Hill School, in Hartman and Shumaker. *Op. cit.*

Objective: To give practice in telling a story through action; to give practice in improvising dramatic dialogue.

6. *Activity*: To dramatize portions of some world classic (third, fourth, fifth grades) such as *Robinson Crusoe*, the story of Jacob, David and Goliath, *The Odyssey*, *The Iliad*, *Robin Hood*, *Rip Van Winkle*.

Objectives: To build around the children's enlarging literary concepts over a long period of time, a series of experiences suitable for dramatic treatment.²¹

7. *Activity*: To build a marionette stage from a soap-box, for a play to be dramatized from a story selected by the class.

Objectives: To learn to plan, to organize for division of labor, to collaborate in dramatic composition and in artistic production.

8. *Activity*: To write a marionette version of "Puss in Boots" for a peanut or potato puppet show, to be given in a third grade class room to invited kindergarten or first grade children.²²

Objectives: To give children experience in meeting the concrete requirements of play writing under a highly stimulating social situation.

9. *Activity*: To write a simple pageant for class production, about pioneers and frontiersmen in American history, featuring songs and singing games of the times; To invite first and second grades as guests to witness the production of the pageant.

Objectives: To utilize, creatively and dramatically, information gained in other classes; to select material of dramatic value; to gain skill in play production.

10. *Activity*: To dramatize "Hansel and Gretel," introducing music from Huperdincks' opera of the same name, for an audience of third grade guests.²³

Objectives: To gain skill in practical play production; to recognize and utilize dramatic elements.

²¹ Merrill and Fleming. *Op. cit.*

²² "Puppetry in the Classroom." Irene Smith. THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW. November, 1933. Vol. X, No. 9.

²³ "Music and Literature." Anne E. Pierce. THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, June, 1932, Vol. IX, No. 6.

*11. *Activity*: To write a play in response to some community campaign, such as Clean-up Week, Kindness to Animals, etc., for presentation before the school assembly.

Objectives: To respond artistically to social appeals; to gain further experience in presenting ideas through action and dialogue.

12. *Activity*: To write a Christmas nativity play, for presentation before the school assembly.

Objectives: To read and hear read much Christmas poetry, many Christmas stories, and to hear carols to gain the "feeling" of Christmas; to read several nativity plays, both mediaeval and modern; to develop or adapt a simple plot and suitable characters; to strive for appropriateness and beauty in the speeches of the characters.

13. *Activity*: To write a marionette version of selected episodes in Rip Van Winkle for presentation with rag-doll or clothes-pin marionettes, the performance to be given before an invited audience of sixth grade pupils.²⁴

Objectives: To offset inhibitions to writing by the zest and enthusiasm resulting from planning and producing a puppet show; to utilize and develop further knowledge of the practical aspects of play-writing.

TECHNIQUES AND TASTES WHICH SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN INSPIRATIONAL WRITING

A. Verse Writing

- To develop a feeling for physical rhythms
- To acquire a strong background of poetry experience
- To gain a vehicle for creative poetic expression
- To gain freedom in expression
- To develop rhythmic imagination
- To establish idea that poetry is a part of life
- To gain skill in rhyming

- To adapt words and phrases to meter
- To enrich vocabulary
- To give emotional perception
- To stimulate both aural and visual imagination
- To write with restraint and good taste
- To observe accurately
- To employ words fittingly
- To gain critical sense

B. Prose

- To gain a large reading background
- To increase vocabulary
- To write in response to a social appeal
- To write succinctly
- To stimulate imagination
- To revise manuscripts with care
- To gain critical sense
- To employ words fittingly

C. Dramatization and Play Writing

- To give dramatic expression to art appreciation
- To recognize and utilize the possibilities of dialogue
- To portray character by dramatic means
- To overcome shyness in self-expression
- To gain experience in creating and controlling emotion in an audience
- To tell a story through action
- To acquire literary experiences suitable for dramatic treatment
- To work socially, as a group, for dramatic composition and production
- To meet concrete requirements of stagecraft
- To utilize, dramatically, information gained in other classes
- To recognize and select material of dramatic value
- To respond to social appeals
- To achieve appropriateness and beauty in speeches of characters
- To adapt a simple plot to stage presentation

²⁴ "Puppetry in the Classroom." Irene Smith. THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW, November, 1933. Vol. X, No. 9.

Building a Foundation for Better Written Composition

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THE TECHNIQUE of teaching children in the intermediate grades to write interesting as well as "finished" original compositions presents a difficult problem to many teachers. Unless one has developed a very definite plan to use in this procedure, little success can be expected. Perhaps my experience in this matter may help some teachers who have not been receiving satisfactory results. Although I shall discuss the rules I applied to my fourth grade, the same can readily be utilized in the development of fifth and sixth grade compositions.

At the beginning of the fourth school year, written compositions are obviously crude. Permit me to emphasize the importance of criticizing every paper in the first few sets with the class, regardless of the amount of time this procedure consumes. This work may be spread over a number of days, but it is essential for careful development. I have found the following method of class criticism very effective:

Write a child's original composition on the blackboard. Beside this, write the following points for discussion concerning the composition:

I. Title

- (a) Does it make you wish to read the story?
- (b) What does it make you wish to find out?

II. Beginning Sentence

- (a) Does something happen at once?

- (b) What makes the story move immediately?

III. Sentences

- (a) Does each sentence make you wish to read on?
- (b) Is each sentence worded differently?

IV. Vocabulary

- (a) Are the words new and interesting?
- (b) Do the words make a picture of the story?

V. Ending Sentence

- (a) Does it finish the story?
- (b) Is it necessary to the story?
- (c) Does it leave you satisfied?
- (d) Does it explain your title?

Pupils can discuss all compositions in an intelligent manner if these points are constantly before their eyes. As time goes on, they will be able to criticize their own compositions as they write them. The following composition was written by one of my pupils and rewritten after a class discussion with obviously better results:

Riding

(First Paper)

One day we went riding. We left the cat in the house. We were gone for an hour. We came back. My father went in the house. He saw the canary's cage knocked over the cat was on top of it. My bird was nearly eaten. He never sang afterwards. We all ate supper then.

Pupils quickly made the following criticisms:

- I. Title
Arouses no interest.
- II. Beginning Sentence
Very little of importance happens immediately.
- III. Sentences
Monotonous and uninteresting.
- IV. Vocabulary
No interesting new words.
- V. Ending Sentence
Unnecessary.

The story was rewritten in the following manner:

A Close Call

One afternoon when my father and I went riding, we left the cat in the house alone. After an hour had passed, we returned. Just as my father entered the house, he discovered the canary's cage knocked over. The greedy cat was about to have a fine meal. My father saved my bird's life. Although it never sang again, I am glad that my canary is still alive.

This second composition obviously answers all the questions very satisfactorily. The same transformation took place in many other compositions which were criticized by the class.

During the entire school year, we have, on the wall, a certain set of papers to be used as standards for written compositions. The children have selected them and graded them as *excellent*, *good*, and *poor*.

As time goes on, our standards will

change to a higher plane, so we will replace those stories with better compositions, but for now, they meet the needs of the children admirably.

Children find it almost impossible to write compositions with improvement unless they have something definite before them. I sincerely believe that the plan I have presented will be of help.

The following are some of the titles and beginning sentences written by my pupils, which they have selected as the best:

Who is Guilty?

Once, when my mother went away, she left a pie in the pantry.

A Sad Discovery

When I returned from school yesterday, I went to feed my three goldfish.

No Fun For Me

Every day I have to go down the cellar to get some coal for the kitchen stove.

The Doughnut Feast

Mary and I were very hungry, one night.

White or Black?

My brother asked me to crawl under the stove to clean out the soot.

A Waste of Time

Last night I waited one hour to see the Halloween Parade.

Too Quick for Me

My sister saw something glittering on the ground.

Not Deep Enough

Yesterday my father wakened me to tell me it was snowing.

Learning a Lesson

I saw a boy run across the street in front of an automobile.

A Runaway Horse

My mother and I received a terrible fright downtown yesterday.

Editorial

The Criterion of Honest Detail

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, in his essay, "A Note on Realism," drew a distinction between inborn power of creative expression and the will to write effectively. This latter is of great consequence in the improvement of one's style, he thought. There is the inordinate task of shaping details into some ideal design. There are problems of technical dexterity, he declared, in what to leave in and what to take out to give balance and proportion and the right relationship of every part to the whole. These problems are of endless concern to every writer who has the hardihood to grapple with them.

In her article, "Make It a True One," in this issue of *THE REVIEW*, Mrs. Brink says that "A good family story of courage and endeavor is a better heirloom than silver candlesticks." Her statement is a fitting conclusion to that part of her discussion in which she rather intuitively searches out the relationships between good story telling and significant details. In this, she emphasizes the views on realism critically affirmed by Robert Louis Stevenson. It is the artistic and effective handling of the minutiae of the story that really counts. To illustrate her point, Mrs. Brink relates in simple detail an anecdote from the life of her grandmother. "When my grandfather proposed to my grandmother," she recounts, "she sat on the side porch of her father's house shelling peas. Many years later, and many miles away, when they came to tell her that her husband had been killed, she was sitting on the porch shelling peas. So the plop! plop! of round green peas in a tin pan runs through the romance and tragedy, and the inventor of fiction would be hard put to it to invent a more poignant detail."

It is only when details are handled with

such finished simplicity that truth becomes inviolable in the art of story telling. Then and then only, all distinctions of romance and realism vanish, and plain honesty stands in the supreme position of artistic beauty. That is why the child with his sense of the fitness of things still unspoiled by the veneer of adult life so assiduously guards against a false conversion of details in the telling of a story.

The story teller's art turns around the niceties of truth. The plop! plop! of fresh-shelled peas falling into the tin pan, through courtship and bereavement—neither too much detail nor too little must there be! By what better means could the past be probed for the younger generation than by these "family stories of courage and endeavor," providing only that we do have this discipline of truth in the art of story telling.

Lamentably enough, as children grow up, as they progress grade by grade through the schools, they seem to lose their inborn vision for the verities. Particularly is this so today when sophistication and modern realism, gluttonous for detail, dull both eye and apprehension. Mrs. Brink's concern need not be so much that these stories of the past be preserved for the children today, as that they be preserved free from a false realism in their telling. At a time when artistic truth has been largely submerged in stream-of-consciousness style, and in an unintelligible clutter of irrelevant detail by popular writers today, we may well enough pause to consider not merely the desirability of preserving our children's heritage from the past, but how to preserve it untarnished and unspoiled in its pristine loveliness, free from the deadly effects and dexterities, as Stevenson might say, of modern story telling.

Reviews and Abstracts

Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia. Guy Stanton Ford, editor-in-chief. 15 vol. F. E. Compton, 1935. \$69.50 (fabrikoid); \$62.50 (buckram).

Where the initial investment and the cost of maintenance are as heavy as they appear to be in the publication and distribution of an encyclopedia for children, it is only reasonable to look for highly individual characteristics in such encyclopedias as attain reputable names before the public. Although in works so nearly identical in purpose as children's encyclopedias there are bound to be duplications in claims to excellence, competitive conditions, highly organized and sharply accentuated as they are in the sale of children's encyclopedias inevitably bring forth some distinguishing feature in any successful publication.

Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia emphasizes its particular distinguishing feature in the title—*pictured*. The prospective user or reader has, therefore, the right to expect of *Compton's* not only all of the general excellence possessed by any closely competing publication, but as well a decided superiority in picturization. In examining the most recent edition of this encyclopedia, 1935, the reviewer's first attention must be given to the skill with which the books have been illustrated, and to improvements in the quality of pictures. Are the illustrations appropriately and abundantly distributed throughout the volumes? Are they brought up to the highest possible standards of recent photography, art, and lithography? *Compton's Encyclopedia* ranks high in pictorial excellence. Only individual illustrations, and these few, may be criticized for poor photography. The policy seems to be to remove these as new editions appear.

To judge books of this kind fairly, it is important that the peculiar problems involved in publishing them and keeping them up-to-date, authentic, and attractive be recognized. In the set of books now under consideration, which endeavors to give reliable information of such scope and amplitude, for *Compton's* is comprehensive, the task must be enormous. Further, not only must information be given authoritatively and accurately in reference books designed for use in modern schools; the selection, organization, and presentation of the material must be constantly adjusted to new and changing courses of study and teaching methods. The color plates introduced in the 1935 edition were placed

there precisely to bring these volumes more directly into harmony with the spirit of progressive teaching. An addition as rich in promise as are these new color plates under a policy of gradual enlargement and improvement, requires now no close check up on variety, extensiveness, or appropriateness of distribution. The plates that appear introductorily in this edition are of fine quality; the printing has been done in almost perfect register.

Since this is a 1935 revision, a reviewer at this time (January, 1936) should take note of reviews that have already appeared. Louis Shores, director of the Library School of George Peabody College for Teachers, in a review published in *The Peabody Journal of Education*, March, 1935, found previous high standards maintained. Viewing the set retrospectively, he declared that in "authority, scope, arrangement, format, up-to-dateness, treatment, bibliographies," *Compton's* has from the first ranked high. He recommended the set for purchase, especially in the grades.

May Wood Wigginton, readers' adviser, Public Library, Denver, and former chairman of the Subscription Books Committee of the American Library Association, reviewing the *Pictured Encyclopedia* in the *Horn Book*, March-April, 1935, rated it as "very satisfactory" to teachers who assign children topics to be looked up. She approved especially of the alphabetical arrangement and of "the comprehensive and very splendid" index.

Miss Bessie Graham, director of the Library School, Temple University, appraised several children's encyclopedias in the 1935 edition of the *Bookman's Manual*, of which she is editor. She rated *Compton's* first for making "pleasure of information." The editions, she says, have been kept up-to-date pedagogically, and she recommends this encyclopedia for purchase by "those who believe in making learning attractive to a child."

A review in the January, 1935, A. L. A. *Subscription Books Bulletin* characterized the 1935 edition as a *new printing* involving many changes, rather than a true edition. The colored illustrations are noted as giving the set added value, and the reference outlines for study are mentioned as "notable features." The 1935 edition is "strongly recommended" for purchase by homes, libraries, and schools not possessing the editions of 1932 or 1934.

—C. C. Certain

Webster's Elementary Dictionary: A Dictionary for Boys and Girls. American Book Company, 1935. \$1.20.

A dictionary must be accurate. A dictionary must be understandable. These two prime essentials are followed by a host of lesser requirements and desiderata: successful selection of words, if the dictionary is an abridgement; a style of presentation that makes clear the use, the meaning, and the acceptability of words; good typography, and many others. *Webster's Elementary Dictionary* meets all these demands, not only adequately, but pleasingly.

The Merriam-Webster Series, of which this dictionary is a member, has long been distinguished for scholarliness and authoritativeness. The fact that the *Elementary Dictionary* was prepared by the staff that produced the second edition of the unabridged *Webster's International* is assurance of its accuracy. Disputed spellings and pronunciations have been referred to special authorities—style books of famous presses, actors, professors—and technical terms have been defined with the advice of experts in particular fields.

The clarity of the definitions included in this volume reflects as much credit on the editors as the detailed and meticulous definitions in the unabridged dictionary. To explain a thing accurately requires knowledge both of the thing described and of language; but to explain a thing accurately, and in terms intelligible to a child, one must add to knowledge, great understanding and wisdom. These three qualities are evident throughout the *Elementary Dictionary*. The publishers state that the definitions have been "laboratory tested" in school rooms for clarity and understandability.

Selection of words for a volume of this sort is facilitated by the two word lists prepared by Ernest Horn and E. L. Thorndike. With these lists as a basis, the vocabularies found in school text books and in books children draw most frequently from public libraries were studied and used to supplement and modify the word-lists. The fact that there is but one alphabet, including proper names, biographical and geographical names, and abbreviations, makes for greater ease of use.

The physical aspect of the book is exceptionally attractive. The blue-and-buff binding, the gay endpapers, the colored plates, all serve to set the volume apart from the generality of school books. Of greater importance are the clear, large type, the well-spaced page, the variation of type faces used to indicate irregularities of form, the keys to pronunciation and to abbreviations always at hand without the necessity of turning a page, the catchwords; to list all the mechanical excellencies of the book would take too long.

It is no disparagement to say that this dictionary

is limited; it is designed for the use of elementary school children (although its usefulness extends beyond the grades into high school and even to business correspondence), and it frankly sets out to give these children the spelling, pronunciation, use, and meaning of the words they are most likely to encounter. To keep the volume a reasonable size, omissions were necessary. Therefore derivations are not given; usages (as of *that* and *which*) are not presented; no synonyms or antonyms are offered. These delights of the word-lover, however, will scarcely be missed by the group for whom the book is designed. The *Elementary Dictionary* is a thoroughly admirable piece of work.

—Jane Foster

Thorndike Century Junior Dictionary. By E. L. Thorndike. Scott Foresman Co., 1935. \$1.32.

Dictionaries should be an aid to understanding; a sympathetic friend who takes the bewildered one by the hand, and simply and clearly resolves his riddle. Too frequently, however, the dictionaries have been like the Delphic Oracle who gave aid in such obscure and cryptic utterances that only the wise were able to interpret them. The *Thorndike Century Junior Dictionary* is an example of the friendly kind. It is compiled for the use of the "young learner," and his needs are consistently remembered.

Publishers of dictionaries are faced with a dilemma. If they include every word in the English language with adequate definitions, the work becomes voluminous and expensive—impediments alike to the pocketbooks of the parents and the convenience of the children. The publishers of dictionaries in the past have sought to remedy the situation not by delimiting the word list, but by condensing the definitions and explanations. The results were most unfortunate, and their dictionaries ceased to be a helpful and customary tool of learning. The *Thorndike Century Junior Dictionary* has selected a word list of twenty-three thousand words from a "count of the actual occurrences of words in over ten million words of reading matter." This attempt to secure words of great social utility is certainly in accord with modern philosophy. However, we are not told whether the "ten million words of reading material" were from the reading material on the adult or children's level. This is an important point, and should have been clearly stated by the author. Undoubtedly words are included which will seem out of place to a single individual. This may be due to the inclusion of a preponderance of adult literature. This fact should not detract attention from the more important fact which is that there will be a large amount of agreement as to the utility of the majority of the words selected. As one turns the pages of most dictionaries he is struck with the number

of words he does not know, but as he turns the pages of this dictionary he is impressed with the number of words he does know. This suggests that the words are the ones that the child will need.

The language in which a definition is couched is a source of great pleasure to one who has watched children use dictionaries. All our life we have been accustomed to aid children who are trying to decipher the meaning of definitions. We have been forced and accustomed to help children with words embodied in the definition itself. In this book the explanations have been expressed in the language of the child. They use it independently, or with a minimum of assistance.

Since the book is for "young learners" the derivation of words are omitted. This is regrettable in some cases, but certainly makes the text less formidable. The aids to pronunciations are simple but clear. The print is large, and the mechanical setup of the whole book is attractive. This dictionary invites use. It deserves the consideration of all persons who are concerned with the efforts of young people to study independently.

—L. S. Tireman

College of Education, University of
New Mexico, Albuquerque

Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition. William Allan Nielson, Editor-in-Chief. Thomas A. Knott, General Editor. G. and C. Merriam Company, 1934. \$20.00 (buckram).

My viewpoint here is restricted to the elementary school. With adaptations of the unabridged dictionary made for every grade level, it does not always occur to school people that the unabridged volume is also appropriate and valuable for grade-school use.

There has been too much of the assumption, in recent pedagogy, that children should be restricted to child-sized vocabularies and interests of juvenile range. The obvious fallacy is that children are not only children, but potential adults. Everyone recognizes today the mischievous practice of the past which, completely ignoring the rights of the child, confined him rigorously to adult standards. This has lately brought about the opposite extreme, which now threatens to condemn him to infantilism. Formerly the child was made to live his life as an adult and never as a child; now he is made to live eternally as a child, and never as an adult.

Long before the child is grown, he is eating the same food that adults eat. If he did not, there would be the serious danger that his system would not develop to assimilate the nourishment required for the demands of mature life.

Let us recognize, then, that it is just as important for children to see about them furniture and

houses of standard size, as it is for them to be given small chairs and tables and play-houses. It is equally true that the child, while properly equipped with the elementary school dictionary, the high school dictionary, or the collegiate dictionary, should not, even in the lowest elementary grades, be deprived of certain highly appropriate experiences with the unabridged dictionary. From the "big" dictionary he gains certain indispensable experiences, just as the child who sits in a standard size chair gains a sense of proportion that he could never get from toys.

Is *Webster's New International Dictionary*, Second Edition, a highly valuable book for the elementary school child to become acquainted with in the schoolroom and in the library? It is. Miss Florence Tredick, librarian of the Elmer Avenue School, Schenectady, New York, while admitting that "No child . . . leaps at a bound into the intelligent use and appreciation of an unabridged dictionary," declares that "There is one book in my library which draws as a magnet all day long steady groups of admirers, wonderers, users. It is *Webster's New International Dictionary*. Sometimes it is its size that attracts. 'See how big it is!' 'Did you know there could be so many words?' Or perhaps it is the thumb index, or the splendors of the colored plates. The charts, pictures, and diagrams, too, are fascinating. And in maturer years, the joy of a book in which you can find something about almost everything gives it a place supreme in the reference corner of any elementary school library."¹

There is such a thing as the establishment of big book use—reference book use. *Webster's New International Dictionary* is admirably suited to foster such habit-formation, for it lures the child along with the attraction of color plates, charts, and pictures. In the vocabulary, 12,000 terms are illustrated.

Could there be a mightier book to quicken the curiosity of children? The publishers seem justified in their claims to *accuracy, clearness, and comprehensiveness*. The book presents a vocabulary of more than 550,000 entries, "the largest number ever included in a dictionary of any language." There are 36,000 names in the *Gazetteer*, 13,000 in the *Biographical Dictionary*, and 5,000 items in the *Table of Abbreviations*, which, with the vocabulary entries, make a total of more than 600,000 entries.

What a flash of color and sheen of metals are seen in the opening pages in that sheaf of plates giving in brilliant, colorful display, the official flags and seals of the United States, and of other countries, and the house flags of steamship lines! In color, also, scattered through the dictionary are several full page plates. These include common birds,

¹ From "At Work With Books," an unpublished manuscript on file at the office of *THE REVIEW*.

butterflies and moths, and coins of the world. There are, too, many full page half-tones, four in all on air-craft, two pages of automobiles, early and late models, one full page of "Notable Examples of American Architecture," and a page of "Cathedrals and Other Edifices." Children naturally enjoy turning the pages and thumbing the index to discover these pictures and to pore over the line drawings abundantly illustrating the text.

They may not find the story of Webster's Dictionary so absorbingly interesting, but when told that its growth in words parallels the industrial and cultural growth of the country, they will not fail to be deeply impressed. Beginning in 1806 as "A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language," with 38,000 words, the dictionary was enlarged to include, in 1828, as "An American Dictionary of the English Language, 70,000 words; in 1864, as "Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, it had a vocabulary of 114,000 words; in 1890, "Webster's International Dictionary" offered 175,000 vocabulary entries; and in 1909, "Webster's New International Dictionary," its entries totaled 442,000. Finally, in 1934, the second edition attained the amazing total of 600,000 entries. Parallel the significant dates of Webster's Dictionary with those approximately corresponding in American history, and the great lexicographer's place becomes apparent. The frontispiece of this most recent edition is an excellent portrait in colors of Noah Webster, whom every child should know because of the truly patriotic service he rendered his country, and because of the unique place that the dictionary that bears his name has come to hold as an authority not only in America, but internationally in all English-speaking nations.

Consider what an endless procession of curious information can be posted on the library bulletin board to foster the response that the children so spontaneously make to the Unabridged: This book required ten years to prepare for publication. The completed volume has 3,350 pages, and cost more than \$1,300,000 or \$338.00 a page. What child would not like being regaled with facts like these: "A pine tree 30 feet high (or an equivalent amount of wood for paper) and two-thirds of a gallon of ink

go into the making of each copy of this Dictionary. There are forty tons of lead in the type from which it is printed." "The letter S is the champion word-beginner of the English language. The S section of Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, runs 372 pages. X takes just over three." "Set has more meanings than any other verb in the English Language. Webster's Second Edition lists 81 transitive and twenty-four intransitive senses under this verb." These are but random samples of the rich bits of information the librarian may post.

What an amazing opportunity to "seize the moment of excited curiosity!"

—C. C. Certain

The Bookman's Manual. A Guide to Literature. By Bessie Graham. Fourth edition, rev. and enl. R. R. Bowker Co., 1935.

Christopher Morley and A. Edward Newton, among others, have discoursed upon the delights of publishers' catalogues. This admirable book affords a similar enjoyment, for, unlike most book-lists and reading guides, it is completely free from pedantry.

The volume grew out of a course of lessons on book salesmanship, given at the William Penn Evening High School in Philadelphia, and later published serially in *The Publishers' Weekly*. The book is thus eminently practical, for, as the author points out, the bookseller "wants to visualize the writings he hears about as books to be bought from the right publisher and fitted to the right reader."

This is a superlatively good book, and is therefore of use beyond the field it is designed to cover. A librarian, a book-lover, a teacher who is called upon to suggest reading to her pupils, will all find here the kind of assistance they need. They will find the organization especially helpful: Boswell's writings are followed by the writings of Johnson, and Piozziana; Elizabeth and Joseph Pennell's *Life of James McNeill Whistler* is followed by other writings on Whistler by the Pennells, and by Whistler's own *Gentle Art of Making Enemies*. Thus a reader's interest in a subject is fostered and fed.

—D. B.

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